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An Approach to Sensibility Design in Fashion

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Introduction Alvin Toffler (1980) mentions that although the 20th century was focused on information and technology, the 21st century is the age of sensibility. A demand for the development of a sensibility design has been voiced through an increase in the creation of a lifestyle based on products suitable for individual sensibility. Acknowledging the relevance of consumer sensibility and product design, the current research for sensibility design has become significantly active in both the fields of academia and the industrial world. The applications of sensibility are coming to fruition in the fields of philosophy, marketing, design, and architecture, among other areas, and being highly connected to the industrial world, it has been developed as a productive research discipline, claiming numerous innovations and market successes (Levy, 2013). The scholarship on sensibility design can be categorized into studies on enhancing the expressivity in terms of design (e.g., Gero, 2010) and studies of sensibility ergonomics in order to measure the effects of sensibility factors on humans (e.g., Schütte, 2005.; Mizutani et al., 2010). Though, for fashion studies, there are comparatively insufficient studies on sensibility compared to other design fields, it has been considered to be a highly subjective point of view and objective decisions are barely suitable for an academic approach. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to point out the opportunities for sensibility design in contemporary fashion. Thus, this study aims to provide insight into the significant aspects of sensibility design, as a new design solution, and to make an academic database for contemporary fashion studies.

Methods To establish this research, this study firstly identifies sensibility design theoretically through a literature review and finds major sensibility design factors. This study identifies theoretical contents of sensibility design through the exploration of a variety of disciplines within sensibility research from publications in the field of design, media sources, and research report data. Secondly, the study analyzes the relation between the main tendency of contemporary fashion and design sensibility through an analysis of fashion collection over the last decade .

Findings & Discussion Through the examination of a literature review, sensibility design can be defined as providing three major experiences--high-tech, high-touch, and high-culture--through some kind of stimulus based on the five senses of taste, hearing, sight, touch, and smell. As for representative cases of sensibility design, Italy's Alessi has highlighted the company's image as 'a company starting out of design' to focus on a consumer's sensibility experience of luxuriousness, freshness, and pleasure. The founder of Alessi's third heir, Alessio Alessi, emphasized at a press conference in Korea in 2010 that 'the philosophy of Alessi is to create designs that provide happy and joyful sensibilities.' Through an analysis of a decade of fashion collection, the main

tendencies of contemporary fashion analyzed in this study highlights “joy,” “environmental-friendly,” and “high-technology materials”, and the following results detail the application of each to three major experiences in sensibility design.

First, the tendency of visualizing joy or experiencing joy was being delivered through contemporary fashion. This reflects the high-touch sensibility in a design experience that pursues visual imagination and emotional liveliness through a hybrid application of exaggerated forms, new materials, colors, and functions. Second, as environmental problems are perceived as complications directly linked to the survival of mankind, there has been continuous requirements for an environmental-friendly movement (such as sustainability, eco, green, and so forth) in fashion. This does not stop at the passive attitude of applying organic natural factors simply to forms, colors, and materials, but proceeds further on to being an expression of high-culture sensibility that reflects the needs of design efficiency, environmental harm, and energy efficiency to design. Third, in contemporary fashion, the experience of a high-tech sensibility has been provided every year by expressing new colors and patterns or updating the functions of existing fabric through combining new technologies with developing new materials, surface treatments, processing techniques, and digital printing.

Conclusion Having discussed the sensibility design and its aspects towards contemporary fashion, this study is expected to provide a practical assistance for designers to learn more about consumers’ sensibilities to assist them in having insights into fashion design practice. Also, for researchers, this paper builds a foundation for objective point of view in fashion sensibility and a new design approach to fashion studies.

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